

S
Sales – Wenaha
Looking-glass Creek Area

May 1, 1920

TIMBER SALE REPORT

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Forest Examiner.

Foreword,

The Grande Ronde Lumber Company of Perry, Oregon, through its general manager, Mr. Elmer Stoddard, applied in the spring of 1920 for a tract of National Forest timber within sections 5 and 8, T. 3 N., R. 39 E., Wenaha National Forest, estimated to contain from one to three million board feet of yellow pine.

1. Description of the tract:

The area applied for lies in Sections 5 and 8, T. 3 N., R. 39 E., W.M., on the watershed of Looking-glass Creek, a tributary of the Grand Ronde River, the confluence of which is at Palmer Junction, a station on the Joseph branch of the O. W. R. & N. Company. The Grande Ronde Lumber Company has been logging on the Looking-glass watershed for the past three years and now has its railroad grade up to the Forest boundary. Approximately two months' logging remains on the company's lands. The area desired by the company is that which lies within a half mile of the end of the railroad, the plan of the company being to log it with their Holt caterpillar. The tract applied for is a part of a tract of yellow pine which extends up Looking-glass Creek for a distance of approximately four miles from the Forest boundary and is estimated by Forest Examiner Bright to contain over 20 million board feet of yellow pine. This estimate is considered to be a little high. A check cruise made during the examination of the tract shows approximately 4.5 million board feet that can be logged profitably under present conditions. This logging chance includes all the timber on the north side of the creek from the Forest boundary to a ridge running NE at the intersection of Summer and Looking-glass Creeks and a small area on the north side of the Looking-glass above the forks. The remaining pine stand up Summer Creek is too scattered, lies on a steep hillside and the cost of constructing a railroad up Summer Creek would not be justified by the amount of timber that could be handled by it. The boundaries of the area applied for and of the logical logging unit on the creek are shown on the map which accompanies this report.

Gypo contractors of the Grande Ronde Lumber Company cut 26 M bd. ft. of western yellow pine and Douglas fir along the Forest boundary, in innocent trespass, during March, 1920. This timber has been scaled and a detailed report of the trespass has been submitted to the Supervisor.

2. Estimate:

The area was estimated by the examiner on April 20, 21, 22, 1920. The estimate for the logging chance and for the area applied for by the company are given separately. The estimate covers the timber to be cut.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Yellow Pine</u>	<u>Douglas fir</u>
Logical logging chance	350 acres	4,250 M.bd.ft.	300 M.bd.ft.
Area applied for by Grande			

Ronde Lumber Company 105 acres 1,250 M.bd.ft 100 M.bd.ft.

3. Private Interests:

None.

4. Agricultural Lands;

The area involved has been classified as non-agricultural.

5. Silvical Description:

(a) Merchantable timber.

The merchantable forest consists of a stand of western yellow pine on the north bank of Looking-glass Creek of an average width of $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{3}{8}$ miles occupying the hillside and bounded on the south by a strip of white fir, western larch, Englemann spruce and Douglas fir, which is found on the narrow strip of bottom land and beaver swamp along the creek. The pine belt extends to the top of the ridge shading off into a stand of western larch, Douglas and white firs. The pine varies in density and quality over the area. The best timber is found above the trail near the upper limit of the pine, the trees here being tall, of an average diameter of 32" D.B.H. and of good quality. An average grade for the tract would be 5% No. 1 logs, 20% No. 2 logs and 75% No. 3 logs. The pine will run five logs to the tree and four logs to the M. The timber is very sound and breakage will be normal.

(b) Reproduction.

There is sufficient reproduction on the area to restock it.

(c) Undergrowth.

There is little undergrowth in the denser stands. In the light stands on the steep hill-sides the principal brush is service berry. On the upper limits of the pine where the fir species come in the brush is quite dense being composed of service berry, snow brush and larch and white fir reproduction.

(d) Soil.

The soil over the tract is a clay loam of moderate depth. Rock outcrop and scattered rocks occur over the area.

6. Silvical System Recommended:

The marking system in use in the Blue Mountains should be used on this tract leaving approximately 10% of the stand. Brush should be piled and burned.

7. Accessibility:

A logging railroad ten miles long extends from the Joseph branch of the O. W. R. & N. Company up Looking-glass Creek to the Forest boundary. There is approximately 3 million feet of private timber to come out over this road, after which the steel and ties will be removed and used on the company's new road above Hilgard. There is an old ranch house approximately three miles down the creek from the boundary to which a road was built from Palmer Junction. This road climbs out of the canyon of the Grande Ronde, follows up a fork of Moses Creek to its head and drops down into Looking-glass at the point where the valley widens out. The road is practically impassible and could only be made suitable for the hauling of lumber at a great expense. The tract is more accessible today than it will be in the future. On the south side of the creek on the private holdings, a stand of fir and larch has been left, together with a strip above where the pine has been logged. Whenever market conditions merit, there is a sufficient stand of this inferior timber, together with the Government timber above the boundary to justify relaying steel into the Looking-glass. With the exception of the bridges the present grade should last for years. No difficult grade construction is encountered from the boundary to the mouth of Summer Creek. Based on 1919 costs the grade would cost \$30 per station. The yellow pine for the most part is mature but not decadent.

8. Operating Methods:

The Grande Ronde Lumber Company is logging their adjacent timber chiefly with horses, rolling the logs down the steep pitches.

9. Market:

There is little or no local market. Mills on the Joseph branch of the O W R & N Co. have the East Oregon rates.

10. Appraisal:

No detailed appraisal is attempted, but the following items which are based on actual cost data give a line on the approximated stumpage value of the tract:

Based on 1919 and first three months of 1920 costs and selling prices.

Logging

Log cutting	1.50	contract price of "gypo" is \$7.00. 50 cents extra allowed for logging on government timber.
Skidding	6.00	
Loading and hauling	1.70	
Railroad construction and maintenance	2.50	
Forest Service		

regulations	<u>.50</u>	
	12.20	F.O.B. Palmer Junction
	1.25	Freight, Palmer Junction to Perry.
	<u>.15</u>	Unloading
	13.60	Total cost at Perry.

Milling

Manufacturing Mill cost including shipping, dep. etc.	<u>10.25</u>	
	23.85	
	<u>1.02</u>	+ 10% over run basis
	24.87	log scale basis.

Average selling price	\$30.09
Production cost	<u>24.87</u>
	5.22

Margin for profit (Company averaged \$3 per M. in 1919)	<u>3.25</u>
Margin for stumpage	\$1.97

This hasty appraisal would indicate a stumpage value of \$2.00 per M. for the pine, which is in accordance with the price being paid for stumpage on the Grande Ronde River, more accessible but containing a large percentage of fir and larch, a straight stumpage price being paid. An arbitrary price of \$1.00 is thought equitable for the small amount of fir and larch in the area. It is felt that this is the limit the company would pay for the timber.

11. General Information:

The following information which was obtained from Logging Superintendent Bean and General Manager Stoddard of the Grande Ronde Lumber Company gives an insight as to the attitude of the company towards purchasing Government stumpage on the Looking-glass.

The annual cut of the company is from 25-30 million. There is approximately three million left in down timber and decks along the track on the last three miles of track up the Looking-glass, which will take two months to remove. On the north fork of the Looking-glass is a small unit which the company plans to remove before fall, the plan being to be out of the Looking-glass for good before snow falls, as the long main line is difficult to keep open, heavy snow falling in the canyon. The nine or ten miles of steel are to be used on the new grade up the Grande Ronde from Hilgard, where the company plans to begin operating next spring. Near Palmer Junction on the opposite side of the Grande Ronde the company is logging in the watershed of a small creek. Track was laid up this creek last fall but the high water this spring took out the track and bridges. This tract

can be logged in winter due to the short main line to be kept open, but the company feels it must be finished before the high water comes in March. To log this timber together with that up the Looking-glass before March, 1921, will keep the company hustling, without any additional Government timber, and for this reason Superintendent Bean is not keen on the company purchasing any more timber. Mr. Bean felt this way so strongly that he or his assistant, Mr. Salisbury, did not think it advisable to come up the Looking-glass while I was there and look over the situation.

All the Government timber on the Looking-glass that the company would consider purchasing would be the front end that could be reached by a tractor road along the creek of approximately half a mile. This would involve in the neighborhood of 1,250 M. of pine or less than half of the logical logging unit on the creek. Under the conditions under which the company will be operating on the Looking-glass this year it is felt that they would be inclined to renege on a part of this tract if labor or other conditions made it appear that they were going to have difficulty in getting out of the lower Grande Ronde before March, 1921. While it is apparent that this timber will be isolated after the road is removed and that it will be years before it can be sold, it is felt that to sell the face at this time under the conditions stated above would be poor policy on the part of the Forest Service, and if sold would be a source of trouble that the small financial return would not justify.

It is recommended that no unit on the Looking-glass less than the logical logging chance be sold.

(Signed) Geo. L. Drake
Forest Examiner.

